However, after combustion in the engine, methane is converted to other compounds. There is no direct study available *vis-a-vis* use of Compressed Natural Gas as automotive fuel and related global warming.

Wet-land development Project of Tripura

1696. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has sanctioned Rs. 6.35 crores wet land development project-correction, conservation and management of Rudrasagar in Tripura;

(b) if so, whether any fund has been released so far; and

(c) if not, by when the fund would be released to Tripura?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) A conservation and management plan of Rudrasagar Wetland in Tripura at an estimated cost of Rs. 6.35 crore has been received from the Government of Tripura.

(b) and (c) An amount of Rs. 20 lakhs has been released so far.

Environment threat to Himalayas

1697. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Himalayas are under serious threat today and their glaciers are receding;

(b) if so, what is the status of environment in the Himalayas and what steps Government have taken in this regard; and

(c) whether Government visualize any real threat in distant future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The Himalayas are the youngest mountain chain in the world and are yet to stabilise from the point of view of geomorphology and geology. Geological instability compounded with a complex set of biotic and abiotic factors, e.g., population pressure, deforestation, land slides, earthquakes, soil erosion, floods, water scarcity, outward migration of people and poverty have resulted in the fragility of the Himalayan ecosystem. Some studies have indicated that the glaciers in the Himalayan region are showing signs of receding.

The Government has taken various steps to take care of environmental problems in the Himalayas. The hill States of Jammu and kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura. Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram have been categorised as "Special Category States" and are entitled to Central assistance on a liberal basis with 90% as grant and 10% as loan for various schemes including for regeneration and development of the hill environment. Other States in the Himalayan region are entitled for assistance under the Hill Areas Development Programme. G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development has been set up to carry out indepth studies of problems of Himalayas and to develop suitable technology packages for Himalayan Region. Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology is involved with study of Geology of the region. A Steering Committee has also been set up in the Planning Commission to take a holistic view of the problems of the Himalayas.

(c) The threat to Himalayas cannot be visualized on a time-scale.

Directorate for Prevention of Crimes against Wildlife

1698. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to establish a Directorate of Prevention of Crimes Against Wildlife in the country;

(b) if so, whether the crimes against wildlife in the country have increased manifold and non-Governmental organisations are pressing Government to take an effective step in this regard;

(c) if so, whether Subramaniam Committee had also recommended in 1994 to set up a Directorate to check crime against wildlife; and

(d) if so, the reasons for not accepting to the recommendations of Subramaniam Committee at that time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Reports of wildlife related crimes from inside and outside the protected areas come to the notice of this Ministry. Effective strategies are adopted for preventing such crimes with the support of renowned NGO's with proven track record.

(c) Yes, Sir.